EXHIBITION OF THE SEVERANCE COLLECTION
BEQUEST OF JOHN L. SEVERANCE

The Cleveland Museum of Art is exceedingly happy to announce that the magnificent private collection of the late John L. Severance bequeathed by him to the Museum has now passed into its possession, and will be shown as a whole as a memorial exhibition for a period of four months, opening in November of this year. This bequest, the greatest ever given to the Cleveland Museum, ranks among the greatest gifts received by any museum in the world. In the United States it can only be compared in the quality and breadth of taste it shows to the extraordinary gifts of J. P. Morgan and Benjamin Altman to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

For more than twenty-five years Mr. and Mrs. Severance quietly and unostentatiously gathered piece by piece the superb objects which made their house, "Longwood" on Mayfield Road, a veritable treasure house. It was always their avowed intention that these treasures should eventually become the possession of their city, to be enjoyed in perpetuity by their fellow citizens. In November this generous wish will be fulfilled and the collection will be shown as a whole, later to be distributed among the various departments of the Museum to enrich them immeasurably.

The peculiar importance of the collection is its unqualifiedly high quality and the fact that the objects contained in it fall into so many and so varied fields. Great paintings, rare tapestries, extraordinary potteries and porcelains, outstanding furniture of many periods, great sculpture, prints and engravings, bronzes, rugs, round out a roster which would give world importance to any museum and which added to the great collections already in the Cleveland Museum make it incomparably greater.

Among the paintings are a fine early portrait by Rembrandt, a famous portrait of Sir Thomas Hanmer by Van Dyck, early Flemish panels by Albrecht Bouts and a close follower of Roger Van der Weyden, a remarkable landscape by the Dutchman

Hobbema, another by his fellow countryman, Cuyp. There is a Venetian panel by Cima da Conegliano, two extraordinary French eighteenth century canvases by Drouais and Nattier, the former singled out to be shown at the great French exhibition in Burlington House, London. Finally, three great portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Lawrence, and Gainsborough show English eighteenth century art at its best.

There are seven tapestries: three Gothic of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century; one fine Renaissance piece; two eighteenth century by Boucher, one of these coming from the private town house of the late J. P. Morgan; and a unique Chinese hanging made by order of the Emperor of China, Chien Lung, for presentation to Louis XV of France.

The collection of Chinese pottery and porcelain is extraordinary, the pieces beginning in date from the T'ang dynasty in the twelfth century and representing the gamut of Chinese ceramic skill until the late eighteenth century. The extent and quality of this section of the collection will display at their best the ceramic genius of our great ally in the Far East.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Severance loved fine furniture. There are three great cassones, those carved chests of great opulence which were such characteristic treasures of the Italian palace of the early sixteenth century. Even rarer is a series of unsurpassed French Renaissance furniture of the sixteenth century: a richly carved cabinet from Dijon, another from Lyons, each famous in literature and coming from the famous French collections of the Rothchilds and the Spitzers. There is an inlaid table of this period, an equal of which is hardly known, two wall chairs and a finely carved chest. Then there is a whole series of exquisite English chairs illustrating the story of their development from Charles I through Charles II, James I, and Queen Anne, and the early Georges. These are a veritable treasure trove to a museum, illustrating as they do the development of style. There is a settee and six armchairs covered with tapestries designed by Oudry which can only be compared to similar sets in the Rockefeller and Hamilton Rice collec-

tions. There are as well a whole series of pieces of eighteenth century French furniture, largely of the Louis XV period, and thus admirably supplementing the Louis XVI furniture in the gift of Mrs. Rainey Rogers.

There are sculptures by the great fifteenth century sculptors Rossellino, Luca della Robbia, Verrocchio, Baccio de Montelupo, French sculptures of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and an exquisite group by the French eighteenth century sculptor Clodion. There is a garden figure, a replica of a Greek statue, made in the seventeenthcentury for Louis XIV by the renowned sculptor Keller and several fine life size modern garden sculptures by Janet Scudder and Malvina Hoffman.

The engravings include the rare and famous "Hundred Guilder Print" of Rembrandt, as well as other prints by this master graver, also work by Dürer, Van Dyck, Whistler and other masters in this craft.

There is a remarkable Herat rug of the seventeenth century and the superb Pascal Candlestick, one of the outstanding examples of Italian bronze of the fifteenth century. Made by the great Paduan follower of Donatello Riccio it can be ranked with the candlestick made by that artist for the Basilica of St. Anthony in Padua.

It will be seen how varied the collection is, supplementing in an amazing way what the Museum already has. Mr. Severance in his wisdom made no secret of his intention of leaving his collection to the Museum. As President of the Board of Trustees from June 18, 1926, until his death in 1936, and a Trustee from June 24, 1915 on, the knowledge of his intention made it possible to guide the purchases of the Museum into fields unrepresented in his collection.

His wisdom, his modesty, his rare sense of public service, his unfailing taste, his unfailing understanding of what a great museum must be, and his princely generosity made his contribution to the cultural history of Cleveland an outstanding one. He and the late J. H. Wade, who alone ranks with him, have together placed the Cleveland Museum in the forefront of American museums.

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